

University empowers users with self-service analytics

Concordia University runs fast, accurate reports automatically with Toad Data Point.



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*Rebekah Anderson, Director of Business Intelligence,
Concordia University*

CUSTOMER PROFILE



Company	Concordia University
Industry	Higher education
Country	United States
Employees	200 employees; 3,000 students
Website	www.cu-portland.edu

BUSINESS NEED

The university's business intelligence department required a fast, accurate way to run reports and extract meaningful information from its diverse data sources to ensure compliance, improve decision making, and focus on other business intelligence initiatives.

SOLUTION

With Toad Data Point, Concordia University automated reporting, providing users with a secure self-service mechanism for pulling data that saves countless hours.

BENEFITS

- Automates reporting, saving hundreds of hours on the creation of a single report and more than 10 hours each time it's rerun
- Increases report accuracy, reducing regulatory liability
- Empowers departments and vendors to access and refresh reports on demand
- Improves data visibility, decision making and collaboration

SOLUTIONS FEATURED

- Information management

The Portland, Oregon, branch of Concordia University serves more than 3,000 students. This private liberal arts school has a four-person business intelligence (BI) department that supports 200 faculty and full-time staff. The BI team is responsible for creating recurring and one-off reports for the university's various departments, vendors and outside contractors. But the ongoing need to extract meaningful information from its diverse data sources was creating a bottleneck.

One vendor that supports the university's efforts to recruit online students and faculty required access, analysis and provisioning of data for online students, which was not readily available. Providing accurate data to that vendor, as well as other external contractors and internal teams, was growing increasingly difficult.

INACCURATE REPORTING INCREASES UNIVERSITY'S LIABILITY

A standard report the BI team runs for targeted student recruitment programs compares which students apply with those who are admitted, those who put down deposits and those who enroll. Since this data is compiled by multiple departments throughout the university and comes from disparate data sources, the BI team struggled to ensure its accuracy.

"We were reporting students who graduated already, or students who had taken a year off," said Rebekah Anderson, BI Director for Concordia University. "We didn't know who to bill, or if they were late with their payments. We were sending late charges to students who hadn't even started class yet."

Inaccurate reporting also put Concordia at risk for compliance liabilities. To minimize financial aid fraud, where students receive financial aid money without actually participating in classes, the federal government strengthened its requirements for schools reporting participation rates for online classes.

Unable to use prebuilt reports, the BI team had to customize and create reports

based on the university's needs. Starting from scratch and manually creating reports required a long, tedious process. And even after the reports had been created, it sometimes took an additional 10 hours to run them again.

A SINGLE SOLUTION FOR EVERY TYPE OF USER

When Anderson took on the director role two years ago, her goal was to find a way to implement self-service data access and reporting. She wanted to put data collection in users' hands and bring more data into the university's decision making process.

Anderson had prior experience with Quest's Toad for Oracle. "I was hoping Quest would come up with a BI solution," said Anderson. "When I saw on Quest's website that Toad Data Point was essentially just like the tools I had already used, I jumped on it."

Anderson was impressed with how Toad Data Point improves productivity for both technical and non-technical users. "As I was looking for a good selfservice BI tool, I realized pretty quickly that Toad Data Point had everything we needed," said Anderson. "For the more technical data consumers, Toad enables them to provision data, make

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Concordia University*

TECHNOLOGY AT WORK

SOFTWARE

Toad Data Point

Toad Intelligence Central

changes and run reports on demand. For the less technical business consumers, Toad makes it super easy to browse and visualize data without having the ability to make changes. With Toad Data Point, I have a single solution for everything that comes up.”

With Toad Data Point, the university gained a fast and easy way to connect to all its diverse data sources, including a Banner® system by Ellucian®, a MySQL®-based customer relationship management system, a Blackboard Analytics™ data warehouse, SQL Server® and a Salesforce® application.

Toad Data Point also enables Concordia University to easily share data with outside vendors. Vendors can be given access to reports without ever having to install additional software on their machines, and they now have the ability to refresh reports on demand. This keeps the vendor supplied with the information they require, without necessitating a new request and hours of work each time they need a report. Toad also allows Concordia University to determine which tables and data any outside vendor or contractor can access, ensuring the privacy of their students’ personal information.

REPORT AUTOMATION SAVES TIME AND MONEY

Automating reports for outside clients and internal departments has saved Concordia University countless hours. The BI department no longer engages in the grueling manual process of extracting data from individual sources, combining

the data, and then cleaning the data or taking other necessary steps to ensure that it meets all regulatory or governance requirements before packaging it in an analyst-friendly format. Toad Data Point does it all.

With Toad, the BI team schedules and automates report creation and distribution. The team also sets up dashboards that allow internal and external users to access and refresh report data as needed. Since implementing Toad Data Point, requests for reports have dropped off significantly, and the BI team is now free to work on other projects. According to Anderson, “We’re no longer in the business of creating reports. We’ve automated that, delivered self-service tools and finally have time to focus on more strategic BI initiatives, thanks to Toad Data Point.”

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